

Report 8.
NIE

IC 74-1690
11 July 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR: D/DCI/IC

SUBJECT: The New Cambodian Estimate--
A Status Report

1. A Southeast Asia intelligence community meeting took place on 11 July to discuss the new Cambodian estimate. The catalyst for this estimate is the likelihood that the UN will return an unfavorable vote concerning the GKR's seat. This vote could occur as early as September (previous view has been that the problem would not arise until December).

2. The principal question which the NIE will address is, if the UN vote is unfavorable, what will be its impact upon the Lon Nol government's viability?

3. From a military standpoint, the general view of the community is that an unfavorable vote in the UN will have little impact on the war itself. The past year has shown that the KC's military capabilities do not match their intentions, and the UN vote issue will give the KC no increased military capability.

4. The military situation aside, the sense of the present community view is that the GKR's situation continues to be critical but not serious. The same GKR vulnerabilities are there, i.e., weakness of the economy, disunity of the political leadership, absolute reliance upon US support, student dissidence, etc. The community's view, I judge, is that unfavorable vote will further exacerbate these vulnerabilities; however, it will not result in an immediate crisis or fall of the Lon Nol government.

5. Instead, the sensing I get is that the unfavorable vote will be simply another nail in the GKR's coffin. The consensus view of the assembled community representatives is that the GKR continues in decline, there are few or no optimistic signs, the unfavorable UN vote will increase the rate of decline at a slightly greater pace, but the unfavorable factors will not bring an early end to the GKR.



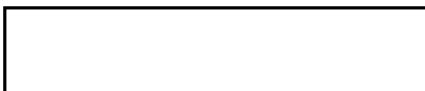
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6. The most sensitive matter, of course, is US aid. Without US aid, the GKR obviously goes under, and fast. Therefore, the most crucial issue becomes what is the relationship between an unfavorable UN vote and future US funding of the Cambodian venture?

7. The NIE will likely come down hard on the cruciality of US aid. It remains to be seen if the community will make clear the fundamental dilemma of the Cambodian problem, i.e., there is little or no likelihood of the long-term survivability of the Lon Nol government. Without making this crystal clear, the intelligence community will not have adequately served the national decision makers in their grappling with this hard issue:

Given the unlikelihood of the long-term continuance of Lon Nol's GKR, how long, and at what level of support, should we continue to fund this endeavor?

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